DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 584 95 EA 008 526

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TITLE Secondary Alternatives in SEA: An Inquiry Into Parents' Choice Making Process.
INSTITUTION Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn. Southeast Alternatives Program.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO MU5-03
PUB DATE 26 May 76
NOTE 49p.; For related documents, see ED 115 683 and EA 008 525-529

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alternative Schools; *Decision Making; Educational Alternatives; *Parental Background; *Parent Attitudes; Parents; Questionnaires; Secondary Education; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS Minneapolis Minnesota Public Schools; *Southeast Alternatives

ABSTRACT

This report is complementary to one on student choice-making. Both were done because of an interest in the recent growth in the number of secondary alternatives in the Southeast Alternatives project. There were two principal reasons for investigating parent opinions about the school programs: to find out how parents felt about the choices available at the secondary level and to find out if these opinions differed from students' opinions. The report has three sections. The first deals with the background of the parents, the second with parents' reactions to the alternative chosen by their child, and the last with parents' attitudes toward school and learning in general. The data are very similar to that collected in the student interviews; however parents seem to be more dissatisfied with the amount students are learning than the students are. Also, the parents of female children express more positive feelings toward competition. The data from the parent questionnaire are biased in the direction of parents with professional jobs. Further, the sample size is quite small in some instances and this makes the data somewhat unreliable. Credibility is given to these data because they so closely resemble the student responses. (Author/IRT)

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ED126584

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Secondary Alternatives in SEA: An Inquiry into Parents' Choice Making Process

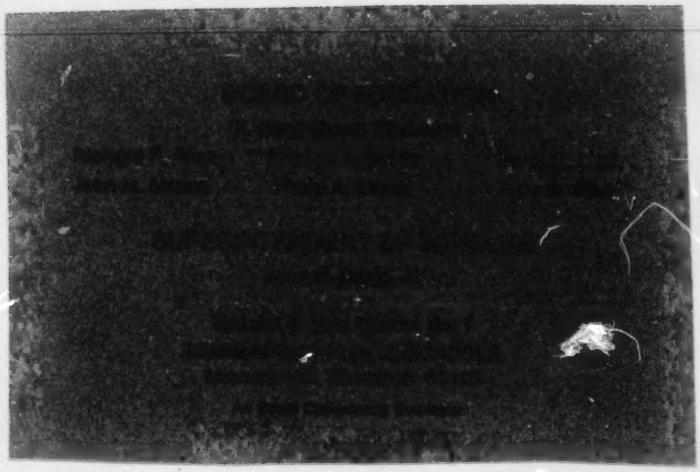
May 26, 1976

Written by: Katherine Gray-Feiss

EA 008 526

MU5-03

This is a SEA Level I formative evaluation report, prepared as part of the Project-Wide evaluation effort. Ideas expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Minneapolis Public School Administration nor the Minneapolis School Board.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SOUTHEAST ALTERNATIVES

November, 1975

The Experimental Schools Program (ESP) is designed to test comprehensive change in education with the intent to facilitate the transition from research and experimentation to practice. Southeast Alternatives, one component of ESP, is dedicated to the following goals:

I. "(The project will provide) a curriculum which helps children master basic skills. . ."

II. "The project will test four alternative school styles (K-6) and selected options in schooling programs for grades 7-12 articulated upon the elementary alternatives."

III. "The project will test decentralized governance with some transfer of decision making power from both the Minneapolis Board of Education and the central administration of the Minneapolis Public Schools."

IV. "The project will test comprehensive change over a five year period from 6/1/71 - 6/30/76 combining promising school practices in a mutually reinforcing design. Curriculum staff training, administration, teaching methods, internal research, and governance in SEA make up the main mutually reinforcing parts."

ESP was initiated in 1971 by the United States Office of Education and is now directed by the National Institute of Education (NIE). In May, 1971 three school districts, Minneapolis Public Schools, Berkeley Unified School District of Berkeley, California and Franklin Pierce School District of Tacoma, Washington, were selected as experimental school sites. Presently, there are five large experimental school sites and 13 smaller ones.

Southeast Alternatives, the name given to the Minneapolis Public Schools' Experimental School Project, was funded for five years. On June 1, 1971, a 27-month operation grant of $3,580,877 was made to the school district. A final 33-month contract for $3,036,722 was approved by the National Institute of Education (NIE) on May 22, 1974.

The approximately 2200 K-12 students in the project include a racially and economically diverse urban population. Southeast Minneapolis, bounded

by factories, flour mills, freeways, multiple dwellings, residential neighborhoods, shopping areas and railroads, also houses the main campus of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Stately old homes, low income apartments and expensive condominiums are all located in the area. This mixture of ages, occupations, interests, and life styles supports a diversity of views about the nature of public education which the five SEA alternative schools established by parent choice reflect.

At the elementary level students may choose to attend any one of four major alternative programs:

The Contemporary School at Tuttle utilizes the graded, primarily self-contained classroom structure. The basic skills of mathematics and language are developed through an individualized multi-test, multi-media approach. Students move between their homerooms and a variety of centers to participate in learning activities throughout the entire school day.

The Continuous Progress School in the Pratt building allows children to advance at their own speeds without regard to grade level. Children are placed in homeroom groupings according to their reading placement. Part of the day is structured with language arts, math, social studies, science, music and other curricular areas. The rest of the student's time is spent in interest groups and interest areas which are staffed by students, faculty, parents, aides and volunteers.

The Open School at Marcy offers its students an opportunity to influence their eduation. An integrated curriculum which emphasizes learning basic skills through experience and the process approach, that of children learning how to learn, to make independent judgments and to discover and pursue their interests, is offered. Children are grouped in multi-aged "families" and a flexible daily schedule allows times for activities at various resource centers. Through the Other People Other Places Center students learn how to arrange for their own resources and

extended trips into the city or wilderness to expand their educational experience.

The Free School (K-12) offers a flexible curriculum which allows students to pursue the areas they wish to develop and experience with emphasis on making the curriculum relevant to present day issues and enhancing students' skills, knowledge and inner autonomy for acting as free people in an environment of change. The Free School is particularly committed to recognize and oppose racism, sexism and class oppression in today's world. Students are grouped into primary, middle and secondary categories with some cross-age teaching across groups. Although basic skills are stressed, and graduation requirements are set, a flexible approach is used in achieving goals.

The middle school program at Marshall-University High School has been designed to meet the needs of the diverse groups of students coming from the various SEA elementary programs. An Open and Continuous Progress program is available for students in 6th-9th grades. Students 11 and 12 years of age may choose to remain in their elementary school until grade 7 or enter either of the other two transitional programs. Graded classrooms are available to 7th and 8th graders. A.L.E., the adjusted learning environment for students with special needs, and a special reading center are also offered to Junior High students. Teachers work in teams to offer a coordinated program.

A flexible array of courses and activities are available at the 9-12 Senior High School level. Each Marshall-U student, with parental consent, designs his or her own educational program within a trimester system of twelve week courses. In addition to single discipline courses there are inter-disciplinary courses, independent study opportunities, and a variety of off-campus learning programs in the community: a 9-12 open classroom for 60 students now makes possible K-12 open education in SEA.

Advisory/governing councils consisting of parents, faculty, staff, and sometimes students have been established at all five SEA schools. An SEA Management Team of principals and managers of K-12 service programs has merged with the Southeast Council which is composed of parent and staff representatives from each school and other community representatives. The council serves as a strong advisory to the SEA director.

A Teacher Center has been established to provide staff and parents with an opportunity to receive substantial in-service training as well as to provide an avenue for preservice experiences. An In-service Committee made up of teachers from the SEA schools and three community people receive proposals and act on them, thus providing a direct role for staff and parents in the staff development activities. The University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools jointly operate the Teacher Center which was first initiated with federal SEA funds.

Two evaluation teams are directly involved with the SEA project. Level I (Internal) evaluators work for the Minneapolis Public Schools and are administratively responsible to the SEA director. The Level I team conducts formative evaluation activities as requested by project participants such as parents, students, faculty, administrators and the Board of Education. The purpose of this type of formative evaluation is to provide information that will be useful in developing effective educational programs and improving the project.

The Level II Evaluation Team is organized by Educational Services Group. This external team is known as the Minneapolis Evaluation Team (MET) and is accountable directly to the NIE. The purpose of external evaluation is to independently collect information of a summative nature about SEA which will be of use to practicing educators who are in the process of designing, implementing or operating programs to improve education.

Summary

One hundred and thirty-five (135) families were sent questionnaires concerning Marshall-University High School and its secondary alternatives. Almost 64% of them responded either by mailing in the questionnaire or answering through a telephone follow-up. The parents were selected because their children had been interviewed in the fall on the same issue. This study is complementary to one entitled, "Secondary Alternatives in SEA: An Inquiry into Students' Choice Making Process." The report is divided into three topics - "Home", "The Choice", and "Learning and School in General." The results indicate that in most instances parents gave responses similar to those given by their children.

Secondary Alternatives in SEA:
An Inquiry into Parents' Choice Making Process

Preface

This report is complementary to one entitled, "Secondary Alternatives in SEA: An Inquiry into Students' Choice Making Process." Both were done because of an interest in the recent growth in the number of secondary alternatives in the Southeast Alternatives project. Marshall-University High School presently has two open programs, one for middle school students (grades 6-8) and one for high school students; two graded programs, one in the middle school (grades 7-8) and one in the high school (grades 9-12); and an ungraded program in the middle school (grades 6-8).

There were two principal reasons for investigating parent opinions about the school programs: to find out how parents felt about the choices available at the secondary level and to find out if these opinions differed from students' opinions. The parents of the students (N=135) we interviewed for the previously mentioned study were sent questionnaires. The questions on the questionnaires closely resembled the ones asked of students in the interviews. After a considerable length of time, parents who had not returned the questionnaire were telephoned and, if they agreed to it, asked the questions by phone. A large number of the parents (N=69) did not respond to the questionnaire or the telephone contact. Some had no phone; others refused to answer the questions. In total 76.7% of the respondents mailed in the questionnaire and 23.3% were contacted by phone. Appendix B gives a breakdown of the number of responses by each program option.

Appendix A contains a copy of the questionnaire and the accompanying cover letter.

The SEA Evaluation Team extends a note of thanks to those parents who took the time to answer our questions. We hope the information they pro-

vided will be useful to decision makers in Minneapolis in the coming year.

The following report, like its companion on student choice making, is divided into three sections. The first section, "Home," deals with the background of the parents. The second section, "The Choice," concerns parents' reactions to the alternative chosen by their child. The last section deals with parents' attitudes toward school and learning in general. In each section the group results as well as significantly different results are discussed.

Unlike the report on student choice, however, the percentages in this document are carried out to one decimal place. Therefore all tables total 100%. Also only results which were significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level are listed in the comparative tables.

The parent group was small and there was a chance in some cases that the results might be spurious; thus restrictions were placed on what would be reported to prevent the introduction of unreliable data.

I wish to thank the SEA clerical staff for their assistance in typing and editing this report.

Katherine Gray-Feiss

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The students who were interviewed for the complementary study were asked their parents' occupation and educational level. The parents who sent in the questionnaire also provided information about their occupation and educational level. By comparing these data, it was possible to determine how similar the two samples were. It was also possible to determine the background of the parents who responded to the survey.

Table 2 shows the percent of parents who responded to the questionnaire by the sex of the respondents' child. The original interview sample was proportionally divided among male and female students. Hopefully this indicates a nonbiased sample of parents.

TABLE 2. Percent of male and female students whose parents responded to the survey.

Sex of respondent's child	Percent of Responses
Male	48.3%
Female	51.7
Total	100.0% (N=87)

However, there does seem to be some sampling bias according to the occupational categories of the fathers and mothers. Compared to the interview sample, for instance, the proportion of professional fathers in the parent survey sample has increased significantly. Similarly, a higher percentage of professional mothers answered the questionnaire. In addition, an increase occurred in the mothers' occupational category "Homemaker." In general these data can be interpreted to mean that the parent data are biased toward parents who are professionals or mothers who are homemakers. This is somewhat unsettling but unavoidable. Therefore, the reader is cautioned that a bias may exist in the data, even though every attempt was made to contact all the parents of the interviewees.

TABLE 3. Percent of responses to the question, "What is the father's occupation?" (Categorized as shown in Appendix C)

Occupational Categories	Percent of Responses
Professional	67.2%
White Collar	14.9
Blue Collar	17.9
Total	100.0% (N=67)

TABLE 4. Percent of responses to the question, "What is the mother's occupation?" (Categorized as shown in Appendix C)

Response	Percent of Responses
Professional	40.0%
White Collar	16.5
Blue Collar	5.9
Unemployed	1.2
Student	2.4
Homemaker	34.1
Total	100.0% (N=85)

Tables 5 and 6 show the breakdown of the respondents' educational levels. When we compare the occupational category of the fathers with their respective educational level, the result is an extremely high correlation of $r = .74$. On the other hand, mothers' occupational and educational categories are not as highly correlated ($r = .41$). The lower correlation for mothers can be explained, in part, by the category of homemaker; women for all educational backgrounds apparently choose to be homemakers. Since the parents' occupational categories are closely correlated with the educational level obtained, for the most part only occupational categories are used in the rest of this report.

TABLE 5. Percent of responses to the question, "How much education does the father have?"

Response	Percent of Responses
Less than High School Diploma	11.3%
High School Diploma	9.9
Vocational Technical Training	5.6
Some College	15.5
College Degree (4 years)	8.5
Some Graduate Training	12.7
Graduate Degree	36.6
Total	100.0% (N=71)

TABLE 6. Percent of responses to the question, "How much education does the mother have?"

Response	Percent of Responses
Less than High School Diploma	7.1%
High School Diploma	20.0
Vocational Technical Training	4.7
Some College	27.1
College Degree (4 years)	7.1
Some Graduate Training	17.6
Graduate Degree	16.5
Total	100% (N=85)

Table 7 shows some interesting demographic information about the combined occupations of parents in the sample. First, most professional and white collar husbands marry professional and white collar wives. Second, women married to professional men are less likely to be homemakers than women who marry men who are classified into other occupational categories. Third, in all categories at least half of the mothers worked outside of the home.

TABLE 7. Percent of responses to the question, "What is the father's occupation?", as categorized in Appendix C by the responses to the same question about the mother.

Mother's occupational category	Father's occupational category		
	Professional	White Collar	Blue Collar
Professional	52.3%	40.0%	16.7%
White Collar	18.2	10.0	16.7
Blue Collar	2.3	-	25.0
Homemaker	27.3	50.0	41.7
TOTAL	100% N=44	100% N=10	100% N=12

Taking a closer look at the fathers' occupational categories, we see that professional fathers tend to have children in the ungraded or the open

program in the secondary school setting. Also there are large numbers of blue collar fathers who have children in one of the two graded programs. These data follow the same pattern as the student sample but the differences are more exaggerated in the parent sample.

TABLE 8. Percent of responses in each program to the question, "What is the father's occupation?", as categorized in Appendix C.

Father's occupational category	Ungraded 6-8	Graded 7-8	Open 6-8	Open 9th	Traditional 9th	Pratt 6	Marcy 6
Professional	88.9%	28.6%	85.7%	83.3%	64.7%	100%	50%
White Collar	11.1	21.4	14.3	-	11.8	-	50
Blue Collar	-	50.0	-	16.7	23.5	-	-
TOTAL	100% N=18	100% N=14	100% N=7	100% N=6	100% N=17	100% N=1	100% N=4

The mothers' and fathers' occupational categories for the various programs follow a similar trend, but there are some differences. First, there are fewer professional mothers than professional fathers. Second, fewer mothers than fathers have blue collar jobs. Lastly, the decreases in the previously mentioned categories can be explained by an increase in the number of mothers in the occupational category "Homemaker." There were mothers of students in all programs but one who were homemakers. In general, occupational categories of mothers showed trends that are similar to those found in the student interview data.

TABLE 9. Percent of responses in each program to the question, "What is the mother's occupation?", as categorized in Appendix C.

Mother's occupational category	Ungraded 6-8	Graded 7-8	Open 6-8	Open 9	Traditional 9	Pratt 6	Marcy 6
Professional	40.9%	11.8%	50.0%	57.1%	36.8%	25.0%	87.5%
White Collar	13.6	23.5	-	28.6	15.8	50.0	-
Blue Collar	9.1	17.6	-	-	-	-	-
Unemployed	-	-	-	-	-	25.0	-
Student	-	5.9	-		5.3	-	-
Homemaker	36.4	41.2	50.0	14.3	42.1	-	12.5
TOTAL	100% N=22	100% N=17	100% N=8	100% N=7	100% N=19	100% N=4	100% N=8

The parents were asked who the student usually talked to at home about school. Most parents responded that students talked to their mothers (see Table 10). The was similar to the data obtained in the student interviews.

TABLE 10. Percent of responses to the question, "At home, who does the student usually talk to about school?"

Response	Percent of Responses
Father	6.9%
Mother	42.5
Sister	1.1
Other relatives	1.1
Both Mother & Father	23.0
Combination of above list	25.3
Total	100% (N=87)

When asked, "How interested are you when your child talks to you about school," almost 90% of the parents responded, "Very interested." This was more interest than the students reported when asked a similar question (see Table 11). There was also a difference found in these data. There was a significantly greater number of fathers listed as the person talked to if the parents were contacted by phone (see Table 12). Several interpretations could be made, but it may also be just a chance occurrence.

TABLE 11. Percent of responses to the question, "How interested are you when your child talks to you about school?"

Response	Percent of Responses
Very	88.5%
Somewhat	10.3
A little	1.1
Not really	-
Total	100% (N=87)

TABLE 12. Percent of responses to the question, "At home, who does the child usually talk to about school?" by the form of contact with the respondents.

Contact with the Respondent	Who Parents reported that a student talked to about school					
	Father	Mother	Sister	Other Relative	Both Mother and Father	Combination of others
Mailed in Questionnaire	40%	70.3%	100%	100%	70%	100%
Telephone interview	60	29.7	-	-	30	-
TOTAL	100% N=5	100% N=37	100% N=1	100% N=1	100% N=20	100% N=22

Parents were asked if they had visited their child's classroom or MUHS this year or last. About 69% said "yes." This is a larger percent of "yes" responses than was received from students when they were asked if their parents had visited school this year. Since the parent questionnaire was given later in the year, perhaps some parents made school visits after we interviewed their children. Or perhaps our parent sample is biased in the direction of those who had made school visits. There is some evidence that the latter interpretations may be appropriate.

TABLE 13. Percent of responses to the question, "Has either (parent) visited the child's classroom (or MUHS) this year or last?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	69%
No	31
Total	100% (N=87)

Table 14 shows that parents were more likely to have visited school (MUHS) if the father's occupational category was professional or white collar. Since these data are biased toward professional parents, this bias may explain the differences found in the student and parent visitation data.

TABLE 14. Percent of responses to the question, "Has either (parent) visited your child's classroom (or MUHS) this year or last?", by the father's occupational category.

If parents visited MUHS	Father's occupational category		
	Professional	White Collar	Blue Collar
Yes	82.2%	70.0%	41.7%
No	17.8	30.0%	58.3%
TOTAL	100% N=45	100% N=10	100% N-12

When the parents were asked their general impressions of MUHS, they were slightly more negative than positive.

TABLE 15. Percent of responses in each category to the question, "What were your general impressions of MUHS?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Positive	43.1%
Neutral	8.6
Negative	48.3
Total	100% (N=58

The comments on the following page indicate how parents felt about Marshall-U and how they were categorized as positive or negative.

In summary, the parent data is probably biased toward the attitudes of professional parents. The data, however, do reflect parents of equal numbers of boys and girls. The correlation between fathers' occupational category and educational level (r = .74) is much higher than the correlation between mothers' occupational category and educational level (r = .41). The reason for this difference was the large number of homemakers from all educational levels. Fathers tend to be married to mothers of similar occupational categories.

The ungraded and open programs are populated by students from professional and white collar homes. The graded programs were the most likely choice for students from blue collar homes. In general parents reported that students talked to their mothers about school more frequently than they talked to other family members. The parents almost always reported they were very interested in what the students had to say about school.

When parents were asked about visiting school, about 70% said they had visited in one of the last two years. The parents were generally divided about their impressions of MUHS, with slightly more parents being negative.

TABLE 16. Comments about Parents' General Impressions of MUHS

POSITIVE

-academically the teachers seemed concerned and willing to be flexible. The only disturbing aspect was the retrenchment in the industrial arts program.
-good school
-nice school
-seem to lack some materials. Need more staff. Teachers are usually dedicated people in "open" situations.
-Favorable (and would like note about open house sent closer to the date rather than 3 weeks before)
-good instructional program considering the limitations of small enrollment and outdated physical plant.
-above average staff and courses offered - with some exceptions
-relaxed, concerned, student-oriented
-all right
-really impressed. Teaching methods work very well.
-Teachers very interested in children and they are likable
-good because they let you know how your child is doing in school
-liked teachers
-students look enthusiastic
-staff generate enthusiastic and exciting learning climate (open parent)

NEUTRAL

-I don't have anything to compare it to
-have heard it is a good school

NEGATIVE

I. Physical
   -didn't like it - depressing physical (bldg)
   -physically ugly, not a school I'd want to go to
   -little old high school - depressing bldg.
   -enormous (overwhelmed), run down traditional square school
   -school not kept up

II. Students
   -too much freedom
   -lot of fooling around
   -lack of respect for the staff, kids wandering in the halls, hallways were chaotic and uncomfortable. The kids seem to have no comfortable place to spend their free hours. Kids in halls were not nice to one another.
   -stuffy, uptight, bureaucratic
   -discipline problems hold up classes
   -other educational quality has declined, too many choices, need more vocational classes
   -obsolete materials and programs
   - some tension
   -chaos
   -more direction and guidance needed for new students to help student be more comfortable
   -no good if student is not smart.

The Choice

Parents, like the students, were asked about the program that had been chosen this year. On several questions parents' responses were open-ended. These open-ended responses were coded into response categories. For other questions parents were asked to answer in one of three ways. If the question were of the latter type, parents were also permitted to write in comments or explain their response. If several comments were made, these comments have been included in the report.

The first question about the choice was, "Why do you (the parents) think (the child) chose that program?" Parents gave the following responses:

TABLE 17. Percent of responses to the question, "Why do you think (the child) chose that program?"

Response	Percent of Response
Parents' choice for student	12.3%
Marshall was intimidating	1.1
Was in before, used to it, felt safe in it	24.7
Better education	9.0
Peers - own age, friends in it	23.6
Don't know	2.2
Able to choose what want to study	10.1
All other alternatives closed when registering	7.9
More structure	3.3
Recommended by teachers, counselors, other educators	2.2
More challenging	1.1
Relationship with teachers	1.1
Independence	1.1
TOTAL	100% (N=89)

Comparing the reasons given by students and parents, several similarities may be noted. First, the two most frequently given responses - "Friends in it," and, "We're used to it" - are the same. Second, the percent of parents giving the response, "Parents' choice for the students," was about the same percent as the student data showed. Third, when the reasons, "Better education," and, "Able to choose what want to study" are added together, as they were in the student response category, they rank as the third most frequent

reason given. This closely parallels the student data. There was, however, also a notable difference. Many more parents (7.9%) reported their children could not get into other alternatives because the alternatives were closed. No students mentioned this - at least not in exactly those terms. They did tell anecdotes that might indicate closed registration contributed to their choice.

Of the parents surveyed, 84% indicated that they discussed the choice with their children. This compares with 83% of the students who said the same thing.

TABLE 18. Percent of responses to the question, "Did you talk (the choice) over with your child?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	84.0%
No	16.0
Total	100% (N=81)

However, 16.4% of the parents disagreed with the choice and said it would not have been their choice. This is a much higher number of disagreements than students reported. The increase could be explained by the fairly large number of parents reported by the students as "leaving it up to the student" (19%) but not against the choice. This group of parents may be the parents who really disagreed with the choice and reported their displeasure when asked by the parent questionnaire.

TABLE 19. Percent of responses to the question, "Would (your child's choice) have been your choice?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	83.6%
No	16.4
Total	100% (N=73)

Looking at the parents who discussed the choice with their children, you will find that the fathers are typically employed as professional or white collar workers.

TABLE 20. Percent of responses to the question, "Did you talk over (the choice) with your child?", by the father's occupational category.

Did you discuss your child's choice with him/her	Father's occupational category		
	Professional	White Collar	Blue Collar
Yes	97.7%	100%	54.5%
No	2.3	-	45.5
TOTAL	100% N=44	100% N=8	100% N=11

Similarly each step in mothers' occupational category, going from professional to blue collar, showed a decline in the percent of parents who discussed the choice with their children. The mothers who are homemakers were also highly likely to discuss the choice with their children. They were, in fact, only superceded by the mothers who were professionals.

TABLE 21. Percent of responses to the question, "Did you talk over (the choice) with your child?", by the mother's occupational category.

Did you discuss your child's choice with him/her	Mother's occupational category					
	Professional	White Collar	Blue Collar	Unemployed	Student	Homemaker
Yes	96.7%	78.6%	60.0%	-	100%	81.5%
No	3.3	21.4	40.0	100%	-	18.5
TOTAL	100% N=30	100% N=14	100% N=5	100% N=1	100% N=2	100% N=27

Parents who reportedly discussed the program with their children were also significantly more likely to have responded by mailing in their questionnaire rather than requiring a follow-up telephone call.

TABLE 22. Percent of responses to the question, "Did you talk over (the choice) with your child?", by the form of contact with the respondents.

Did you discuss your child's choice with him/her	Contact with the Respondent	
	Mailed in Questionnaire	Telephone Interview
Yes	91.7%	60.0%
No	8.3	40.0
TOTAL	100% N=60	100% N=20

Parents were also asked, "What do you like most about the program your child is in?" The responses indicated that as a group they liked the classes or classwork the best. The second most frequently given response was, "Work at (child's) own level." The following table (Table 23) gives a complete listing of the parents' responses. In general they were very similar to the students' responses.

TABLE 23. Percent of responses to the question, "What things do you like most about the program your child is in?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Individualized attention	4.3%
Openness	1.1
Interest in child's total development	3.3
Structure	7.6
Work at own level	15.2
Classes, choice of classes, classwork	27.1
Different locations for different classes	1.1
Used to it	1.1
Nothing	3.3
Students own age	1.1
Better able to adjust, make friends	2.2
Teachers motivate students	2.2
Teachers	6.5
"Students are pushed"	2.2
Better education - challenged	8.7
Don't know	6.5
Students can tell where they're at	1.1
Students like it	5.4
TOTAL	100% (N=92)

Table 24 gives the breakdown of parent responses concerning what they like most about the choice by the program their child was enrolled in. There are differences in the what parents with children in the different programs view as the best things about that program. For example, some parents with a child in one of the two graded programs (Graded 7-8 and Traditional 9) suggest structure was what they liked the most; parents with children in the other programs did not mention this. Another example is that the parents of open program children (6-8, 9, and Marcy) mentioned the interest in the child's total development as one of the things they liked best. Parents of

children in the graded program also suggested that they liked the fact that teachers motivate students or in a few cases that "students are pushed." These statements roughly parallel the students' responses to a similar question.

TABLE 24. Percent of responses in each program to the question, "What things do you like most about the program your child is in?"

Responses	Ungraded 6-8	Graded 7-8	Open 6-8	Open 9	Traditional 9	Pratt 6	Marcy 6
Individualized attention	5.3%	-	-	-	4.1%	-	40.0%
Openness	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0
Interest in child's total development	-	-	12.5	25.0	-	-	20.0
Structure	-	18.8	-	-	8.2	-	20.0
Work at own level	15.8	-	50.0	-	4.1	100%	-
Classes, choice of classes/classwork	31.6	37.5	-	50.0	41.1	-	-
Different locations for different classes	-	-	-	-	4.1	-	-
Used to it	-	-	-	-	4.1	-	-
Nothing	-	-	12.5	-	4.1	-	-
Students own age	-	-	-	-	4.1	-	-
Better able to adjust, make friends	5.3	-	-	-	4.1	-	-
Teacher(s) motivate students	-	6.3	-	-	4.1	-	-
Teachers	10.5	-	-	-	8.2	-	-
Students are pushed	-	-	-	-	4.1	-	-
Better education - challenged	15.8	12.5	12.5	-	4.1	-	-
Don't know	15.8	12.5	12.5	-	-	-	-
Students can tell where they're at	-	12.5	-	-	-	-	-
Student likes it	-	12.5	-	25.0	-	-	-
TOTAL	100% N=23	100% N=18	100% N=12	100% N=6	100% N=24	100% N=4	100% N=5

When parents were asked to list the things they liked least, the most frequent answer was, "Nothing" (17.3%). The second most frequently given response was, "Don't know" (16%). These two responses and the low number of parents giving other responses indicate a small degree of criticism about the programs on the part of parents. It may be due to positive feelings or it may be due to a lack of knowledge about the school and its programs.

The major complaints centered around a lack of emphasis on the basics and no push (or challenge) for students who need it. The complete list of responses to this question are given below in Table 25.

TABLE 25. Percent of responses to the question, "What things do you like least about the program your child is in?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Nothing	17.3%
Hard for students to get any of the teacher's time	2.7
Lack of emphasis on basics - 3R's	10.7
Contact with only one teacher	2.7
Students not "pushed"	2.7
No emphasis on emotional growth or building personal relationships	1.3
More emphasis on math and science	1.3
Teachers way of discipline	2.7
No push for students who need it (or challenge)	8.0
Don't know	16.0
Not enough staff	6.7
Education not feeling oriented	1.3
Number of class options	6.7
Not getting to know other students	1.3
Different ages of students	1.3
Not enough classwork given to students	2.7
Time school starts	1.3
Stifled, because have to stay with rest of class in a subject	1.3
Certain classes	5.3
Loosing our good teachers	1.3
Teachers	2.7
No structure	2.7
TOTAL	100% (N=75)

When the things that parents liked least are broken down by the program choice of their children, we find some interesting results (Table 26). First, the largest percent of parents who responded, "Don't know" have children in the Open 6-8 program. Second, the lack of emphasis on the 3R's (the basics) were felt by parents in the Ungraded 6-8, Open 9, Traditional 9, and Marcy. Third, at least some parents in all the programs responded that "nothing" was wrong with their child's program; however, Pratt parents gave this response more frequently than other parents. Fourth, parents at Marcy complained the students were "not pushed," and parents with children in the Ungraded 6-8, Grades 7-8, and Traditional 9 felt there was no push (or challenge) for

students who need it. Fifth, the most frequently given response by parents of students in the traditional ninth grade program was that there is "not enough staff." Lastly, parents with children in the open programs (6-8 and 9) were critical of the teachers in these programs.

TABLE 26. Percent of responses in each program to the question, "What do you like least about the program your child is in?"

Responses	Ungraded 6-8	Graded 7-8	Open 6-8	Open 9	Traditional 9	Pratt 6	Marcy 6
Nothing	12.6%	23.1%	14.3%	16.7%	13.3%	50.0%	28.6%
Hard for students to get any of the teacher's time	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	14.3
Lack of emphasis on basics - 3R's	25.0	-	-	33.3	6.7	-	14.3
Contact with only one teacher	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.3
Students not pushed	-	-	-	-	-	-	28.6
No emphasis on emotional growth or building personal relationships	-	-	-	-	-	25.0	-
More emphasis on math & science	-	-	-	-	-	25.0	-
Teacher's ways of discipline	6.3	-	-	-	6.7	-	-
No push for students who need it (or challenge)	12.5	7.7	-	-	13.3	-	-
Don't know	12.5	38.5	42.9	-	13.3	-	-
Not enough staff	6.3	-	-	-	26.7	-	-
Education not "feeling" oriented	-	-	-	-	6.7	-	-
Number of class options	-	-	14.3	-	13.3	-	-
Not getting to know other students	-	-	14.3	-	-	-	-
Different ages of students	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not enough classwork given to students	6.3	7.7	-	-	-	-	-
Time school starts	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stifled because have to stay with class in subject matters	-	7.7	-	-	-	-	-
Certain classes	-	7.7	-	-	-	-	-
Loosing our good teachers	-	7.7	-	-	-	-	-
Teachers	-	-	14.3	16.7	-	-	-
Not structure	-	-	-	33.0	-	-	-
TOTAL	100% N=16	100% N=13	100% N=7	100% N=6	100% N=15	100% N=4	100% N=7

The results found in Table 26 resemble the things students disliked about their choice. Both parents and students seem somewhat satisfied with their choice.

Parents were asked if they would recommend their child's choice to other students; the vast majority said "yes, to at least some other students." Table 27 showed the percent of parents who gave each response. These data are significantly more positive than the data students provided. For example, twice as many parents (22%) would recommend their child's program to all students as students themselves would (11%).

TABLE 27. Percent of responses to the question, "Would you recommend your choice to other parents for their children?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
No	8.0%
All other children (or students)	22.7
Only some children (or students)	69.3
Total	100% (N=75)

Comments about the type of student to whom parents would recommend their child's program are listed on the following page.

The last question in this section about "The Choice" asked about the parents' previous experience with other schools. As one can see in Table 29, the most frequent experience had been with Marshall-University and traditional elementary schools. This did not differ significantly among the various program options. It did differ, however, by two other variables - mother's educational level and the type of contact made with the respondent.

TABLE 28. Comments regarding the kind of student to whom a parent would recommend their child's program.

UNGRADED 6-8
- -work independently
- -looked over others and this one was it for them
- -need support of a younger peer group and can only be with their younger friends this way
- -motivated

GRADED 7-8
- -depend on family life style
- -motivated and have internalized what the school's about
- -want discipline and guidance
- -depends on student

OPEN 6-8
- -work on own
- -self-motivated

OPEN 9
- -independent, self activating children
- -self-directed; also goof-offs would love it
- -self motivated
- -bright mature, very independent and responsible

TRADITIONAL 9
- -need to be motivated, need structure
- -less background of reading and school work, etc.
- -to each his own
- -lack of self-actualization
- -average academically
- -can tolerate distance from friends and classmates
- -choice is really related to expectations of parents and what they can afford
- -would share what we considered in making this choice

PRATT
- -This program in the middle between many restrictions and total freedom
- -those who can achieve and learn without a lot of structure

MARCY
- -Don't really know
- -child who wants to work outside of a set routine, child who needs more challenge or more help or who likes to work independently.

TABLE 29. Percent of responses to the question, "What other types of schools or alternatives have you ever been involved in?"

Response	Percent of Responses
Community school	2.9%
Traditional elementary schools	21.4
Ungraded elementary schools	7.1
Open elementary schools	12.9
Free School	4.3
Day care	2.9
Alternative schools	1.4
School administration/resource person	12.9
Marshall-University High	34.3
Total	100% (N=70)

First, the mother's educational background showed that those mothers who had had previous experience with open school had generally at least a high school degree. And day care experience was most frequently mentioned by mothers who had had vocational technical training. Although mothers from all educational backgrounds seemed to have had experience at Marshall-University High School, it did seem to increase with increased levels of education. (Results are on following page - Table 30)

Second, those parents most likely to have mailed in the questionnaire had had experience at MUHS (see Table 31). The parents who were contacted by phone were more likely to have had experience at a free school or an ungraded school, or to have had administrative (office) experience.

TABLE 31. Percent of responses to the question, "What other types of schools or alternatives have you ever been involved in?", by the type of contact made with the respondent.

	Type of contact made with respondent	
Former Educational Experience	Mailed in Questionnaire	Telephone Interview
Community school	4.0%	-
Traditional elementary schools	22.0	21.1
Ungraded elementary schools	6.0	10.5
Open elementary schools	12.0	15.8
Free School	2.0	10.5
Day care	4.0	-
Alternative schools	2.0	-
School administration/resource person	4.0	36.8
Marshall-University High	44.0	5.3
TOTAL	100% N=50	100% N=19

TABLE 30. Percent of responses to the question, "What other types of schools or alternatives have you ever been involved in?", by the level of education of the responding mother.

Responses	Mother's educational level						
	Less than high school	High School Diploma	Vocational-Technical Training	Some College	College Degree	Some Graduate Training	Graduate Degree
Community school	-	7.7%	-	-	-	7.7%	-
Traditional elementary schools	20.0	30.8	33.3	19.0	20.0	-	44.4
Ungraded elementary schools	-	23.1	-	-	-	7.7	11.1
Open elementary schools	-	15.4	-	9.5	60.0	15.4	-
Free School	-	-	-	14.3	-	-	-
Day Care	-	-	33.3	-	-	7.7	-
Alternative schools	-	-	-	-	20.0	-	-
School administration/Resource person	40.0	15.4	-	23.8	-	-	-
Marshall-University High	40.0	7.7	33.3	33.3	-	61.5	44.4
TOTAL	100% N=5	100% N=13	100% N=3	100% N=16	100% N=5	100% N=13	100% N=9

In summary, the choice according to parents was made most often because the child was familiar with a program or his/her friends were in it. Eighty-four percent of the parents discussed the choice with their children. Typically, these discussions took place in a home where the father was a professional or white collar worker and the mother was a professional or a homemaker.

In general, parents seemed very satisfied with their child's program. Most reported the classes or classroom as what they liked the most about it. When asked about their negative feelings, parents were not very critical of the programs. Seventeen percent said that there was nothing they didn't like and 16% said they didn't know. Most parents also reported they would recommend their child's program to other students. The descriptions of who would be best suited to each program indicated that different students might like different programs. Parents surveyed also generally had had experience at MUHS or a traditional elementary school.

Learning and School in General

Several questions were posed to parents to determine how they perceived their children to feel about learning and school in general. There is of course some overlap with how the children felt about the particular program they were experiencing at the time, but we do not think this appreciably interferes with making interpretations from these data. We were not so interested in how each program differed, but in how the programs affected the student's reaction to school and learning in general.

The first question in this section dealt with the parents' feeling about the teachers. A little over half of the parents felt the teachers were OK and only 5.6% felt that most of them were not very good teachers. This resembles almost exactly the students' responses.

TABLE 32. Percent of responses to the question, "In general, how do you feel about the teachers in your child's program?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
They are very good teachers	41.7%
They're OK teachers	52.8
Most of them are not very good teachers	5.6
Total	100% (N=72)

Parents were also asked how they felt about the amount their child was learning. About 45% "wished (their children) could learn more." This compares to 28% of the students who wished they could learn more. In general, the parents yearned for more learning for their children than the children themselves wanted. Table 33 below gives the complete data.

TABLE 33. Percent of responses to the question, "How do you feel about the amount your child is learning?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
I wish he/she could learn more	44.9%
I feel he/she is learning about the right amount	53.8
He/she is being pushed to learn more than I think he/she should	1.3
Total	100% (N=78)

The parents were also queried about the adequacy of resources (books and equipment) and space. About two-thirds of the parents were satisfied with the resources available. Another 24.1% were not satisfied; the remaining 9% "didn't know." This follows the students' feelings about resources with one exception: None of the students responded, "Don't know."

TABLE 34. Percent of responses to the question, "Do you feel your child has the resources (books and equipment) that he/she needs?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	66.3%
No	24.1
Don't know	9.6
Total	100% (N=83)

Similarly the majority of parents agreed with the space allocations at MUHS. Seventy-two percent felt they were adequate. Several parents, about 15%, responded, "Don't know" to this question too. The rest, 12.9%, felt space was not adequate. These negative feelings about space are not quite as pervasive as the students' feelings, but are similar in proportion.

TABLE 35. Percent of responses to the question, "Do you feel your child has the space to work that he/she needs?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	71.8%
No	12.9
Don't know	15.3
Total	100% (N=85)

As a group, professional mothers are most likely to be critical of space allocations, although unemployed mothers and homemakers were also dissatisfied with the space allocations (see Table 36).

TABLE 36. Percent of responses to the question, "Do you feel your child has the space to work that he/she needs?", by the mother's occupational category.

Does your child have the space he/she needs?	Mother's occupational category					
	Professional	White Collar	Blue Collar	Unemployed	Student	Homemaker
Yes	63.6%	78.6%	100%	-	-	78.6%
No	21.2	-	-	100%	-	10.7
Don't know	15.2	21.4	-	-	100%	10.7
TOTAL	100% N=33	100% N=14	100% N=5	100% N=1	100% N=2	100% N=28

The parents' criticisms of space seemed to be concentrated in the three open programs (6-8, 9 and Marcy) and at Pratt.

TABLE 37. Percent of responses in each program to the question, "Do you feel your child has the space to work that he/she needs?"

Does your child have the space he/she needs?	Program in which student is currently enrolled						
	Ungraded 6-8	Graded 7-8	Open 6-8	Open 9	Traditional 9	Pratt 6	Marcy 6
Yes	86.4%	89.5%	62.5%	42.9%	72.2%	-	57.1%
No	4.5	-	12.5	42.9	11.1	50.0	28.6
Don't know	9.1	10.5	25.0	14.3	16.7	50.0	14.3
TOTAL	100% N=22	100% N=19	100% N=8	100% N=7	100% N=18	100% N=4	100% N=7

Parents were much more negative about student progress reporting than students had been. Over three-quarters of the students thought it was good and about 65% of the parents agreed. The following table shows the breakdown of parent responses. Few of them made suggestions about what they would like to see changed.

TABLE 38. Percent of responses to the question, "What do you think about the way student progress is reported?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Positive	65.1%
Neutral	3.5
Negative	31.4
Total	100% (N=86)

The parents' attitude toward peer-teaching was extremely positive. Eighty-two percent of the parents felt his/her child should spend school time helping teach other students.

TABLE 39. Percent of responses to the question, "Do you think a child should spend his/her school time helping teach other students?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	82.4%
No	16.5
Don't know	1.2
Total	100% (N=85)

There were several comments and qualifiers to this question. They are listed on the following page. (see Table 40)

The following table shows the parents' comments about their children competing with others in school. In general, most parents were in favor of competition, although some felt it was proper only in sports.

TABLE 41. Percent of responses to the question, "How do you feel about your child competing with others in school?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Positive	59.3%
Neutral	3.5
Negative	18.6
If student wants to	4.7
Don't feel there is competition	1.2
Only if it has to do with sports	5.8
That's the way it is, there's always competition	7.0
Total	100% (N=86)

Parents who had female children were significantly more in favor of competition than parents of male children. It is difficult to interpret this trend. It may mean that parents are encouraging girls to be more aggressive or it may be a bias in the sample. It is very interesting in either case (see Table 42 on page 26).

TABLE 40. Peer Teaching comments

UNGRADED 6-8
- -if "teacher" can get their own work done too
- -for limited amount of time
- -best reinforcer there is
- -valuable learning
- -if capable

GRADED 7-8
- -if child excels in a field and enjoys teaching
- -qualified to help
- -if "teacher" can get own work done
- -for instance in sewing class

OPEN 6-8
- -helps give confidence
- -as long as doesn't interfere with other work
- -if student wants to
- -some of time, not all of time

OPEN 9
- -excellent learning tool
- -one of the sheltering forms of learning
- -in moderation and not exploit "teacher students"

TRADITIONAL 9
- -if they want to
- -beneficial
- -useful way of learning
- -good idea
- -good experience for some
- -teaching is learning
- -good for the ego and excellent for the low achieving students receiving the help
- -if work is done

PRATT
- -gives more advanced student chance to learn responsibility, who should understand a certain age more than someone who's just been there?
- -gives them confidence
- -as long as it doesn't interfere with their regular work

MARCY
- -he learns by teaching
- -beneficial
- -to the extent that both continue to learn and that adults not only leaders of knowledge, students have better self-esteem
- -its on excellent teaching device, plus a concern for others can be developed
- -there should be more of it.

TABLE 42. Percent of responses to the question, "How do you feel about your child competing with others in school?", by the sex of the respondent's child.

Sex of respondent's child	Respondent's feeling about competition in school						
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	If student wants to	No Competition exists	Only in sports	There's always competition
Male	45.1%	66.7%	75.0%	75.0%	100%	-	2.4%
Female	54.9	33.3	25.0	25.0	-	100%	11.4
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL	N=51	N=3	N=16	N=4	N=1	N=5	N=6

The last question on the survey dealt with the person to whom parents would turn if they had a problem with the school. In general, they most frequently mentioned the counselor or teachers. This was similar to the students' responses.

TABLE 43. Percent of responses to the question, "If you had a problem with the school, who would you go to for help?"

Responses	Percent of Responses
Administrators (principal, board)	19.5%
Counselors	26.4
Teachers	26.4
Other school staff	11.5
Specific person (gives a name)	11.5
No one	1.1
No remedy	3.4
Total	100% (N=84)

When the parents' responses about who they would go to for help are broken down by program, we see counselors are mentioned most frequently by parents with children in the Graded 7-8 program and teachers mentioned most frequently by parents of children in the Open 6-8 and at Marcy. Pratt parents listed names of people more frequently than other parents.

TABLE 44. Percent of responses in each program to the question, "If you had a problem with the school, who would you go to for help?"

Who would you go to if you had a problem at the school	Program in which student is currently enrolled						
	Ungraded 6-8	Graded 7-8	Open 6-8	Open 9	Traditional 9	Pratt 6	Marcy 6
Administrators	22.7%	15.8%	-	42.9%	22.2%	25.0%	14.3%
Counselors	22.7	52.6	14.3	14.3	27.8	-	14.3
Teachers	18.2	15.8	57.1	14.3	33.3	-	71.4
Other school staff	18.2	10.5	-	14.3	11.1	25.0	-
Specific person (name given)	18.2	5.3	14.3	14.3	5.6	50.0	-
No one	-	-	14.3	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100% N=22	100% N=19	100% N=7	100% N=7	100% N=18	100% N=4	100% N=7

Parents were also asked to write any comments they wished at the end of the questionnaire. The list on the following page gives those comments.

TABLE 45. Comments at end of the questionnaire

UNGRADED 6-8

-pleased that support staff showed interest and concern for son while he was ill and made herself known to him and would know what to do if needed help
-a few bad teachers have cropped up, but there are an equal number of good ones to counter balance. Lists teachers.
-Because of personal and social reasons, children have not adjusted to MPS
-learn a lot by helping others
-would be willing to pay for materials needed in classes (like cooking, etc.) for child
-child has had more than her share of social pressure, name calling, etc. Parents supportive, academically in gear. Needs guidance and support has special needs.

GRADED 7-8

-this year daughter not motivated - questions teaching. Student dislikes school, feels school at fault.
-Son does not enjoy gym when teams are chosen, as best players are chosen first and bad ones last. He feels physically inferior.
-feel questionnaires are complete waste of time.

OPEN 6-8

-unwise to hire new teacher who had no background in open schools (poor judgment). Powers to be in SEA don't care if open survives Benefit most if a single open philosophical administrator is in charge of open K-12 for SEA
-MUHS does not have same amount of opportunities for students - specifically. NO ORCHESTRA

OPEN 9

-the open school 9-12 does not offer an alternative, it's meaningless. Formal program should expect more from the student.
-tell Guertin before blowing up school.

TRADITIONAL 9

-no social emotional vechicle for girls high school age need or would like to see drop-in center and more teenage get togethers
-I have some real questions about M-U academic standards - but I realize the problems in meeting diverse students.
-Marshall misses sometimes on teaching the basics.
-previous children have had favorable teachers, some of these have left or been dropped
-English too analytical child not given leeway to form own opinion
-need emphasis on basics
-very pleased with teachers - they helped with students problems
-student needs a speech teacher

PRATT

-She will be 11 when she enters MUHS - I feel she should be allowed on the school bus until age 13. Two years can help a lot toward maturation.
-Interest groups fantastic, participation in woodworking good for my child

MARCY

-Parent feels there is no chance for their child, but to continue in Open. He won't be able to go to regular school. He's not smart enough, hasn't learned enough to get along in regular classroom.
-Don't see how you expect non-MUHS kids and parents to use it.

To summarize, parents seemed to feel that the teachers in all the programs were adequate. However, a large number of parents indicated they wished their children could learn more than they are learning at present. In fact, twice as many parents gave this response as students who wanted more knowledge.

About 24% of the parents felt that resources (books and equipment) were not adequate. And 12.9% felt that space was not adequate. Those parents feeling that space allocations were inadequate for their students could generally be described as professional mothers of children in the open program.

About 31% of the parents were not satisfied with the way progress reporting is done at Marshall-University, but few parents listed any suggestions for change.

Parents' attitudes toward peer-teaching were extremely positive. Parents were also in favor of competition, although some felt it was proper only in sports. Parents with female children were significantly more in favor of competition than parents of males.

Counselors and teachers were the most frequently referred to in answer to the question, "Who would you go to for help if you had a problem at school?" Counselors were mentioned most frequently by parents with children in the Graded 7-8 program. Teachers were mentioned most frequently by parents of children in the Open 6-8 and at Marcy.

Conclusions

In general, these data are very similar to the data collected in the student interviews. There are, of course, some differences. For example, parents seem to be more dissatisfied with the amount students are learning than the students themselves are. Another example is the significantly more positive feelings toward competition expressed by parents of female children. In order to compare and contrast the two studies adequately, it is strongly recommended that they be read in tandem.

A few words of caution also are necessary. These data from the parent questionnaire are biased in the direction of parents with professional jobs. This may make major distortions in the results; there is no way of knowing for sure. Evidence that this is not the case, however, comes from the fact that these data resemble very closely the data from the student interviews which had respondents from a broad spectrum of backgrounds.

Further, the sample size is quite small in some instances, and this makes the data somewhat unreliable. Interpretations should be made with caution. Again, however, some credibility is given to these data because they so closely resemble the student responses.

Appendix A

Choice Making Questionnaire

What is the father's occupation? (Please explain) _____

_____

What is the mother's occupation? (Please explain) _____

_____

How much education does the father have?

____Less than High School Diploma
____High School Diploma
____Vocational-Technical Training
____Some College
____College Degree (4 Yr.)
____Some Graduate Training
____Graduate Degree (MA, PhD, EdD)

How much education does the mother have?

____Less than High School Diploma
____High School Diploma
____Vocational-Technical Training
____Some College
____College Degree (4 Yr.)
____Some Graduate Training
____Graduate Degree (MA, PhD, EdD)

At home, who does the student usually talk to about school?

____Father
____Mother
____A Brother
____A Sister
____Other _____

How interested are you when your child talks to you about school?

____Very interested
____Somewhat interested
____A little interested
____Not really interested

Has either of you visited your child's classroom (or MUHS) this year or last?

Yes No

What were your general impressions of MUHS?

Which MUHS program is your child in this year? _____

Why do you think he/she chose that program?

Did you talk it over with your child?

Yes No

Would that have been your choice? Please explain, if you disagreed.

Yes No

What things do you like most about the program your child is in?

What things do you like least about the program your child is in?

Would you recommend your choice to other parents for their children?

____No
____all other children (or students)
____only some children (or students)
(If only some, then what kind of children (or students) would like it best?)

What other types of schools or alternatives have you ever been involved in? In what capacity

In general, how do you feel about the teachers in your child's program?

____They are very good teachers
____They're OK teachers
____Most of them are not very good teachers

How do you feel about the amount your child is learning?

____I wish he/she could learn more
____I feel that he/she is learning about the right amount
____He/she is being pushed to learn more than I think he/she should

Do you feel your child has the resources (books, equipment) that he/she needs?

Do you feel your child has the space to work that he/she needs?

What do you think about the way student progress is reported?

Do you think a child should spend his/her school time helping teach other students? Comment if you wish.

Yes No

How do you feel about your child competing with others in school? (e.g., games, races, etc.) (excluding physical education)

If you (the parent) had a problem with the school, who would you go to for help?

Other comments about your child's schooling or this questionnaire may be written below.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

1042 18th Avenue S.E. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414

SOUTHEAST ALTERNATIVES

TELEPHONE 612/331-6252

November 11, 1975

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As you probably know we have been interviewing sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students as part of a study about choice-making in SEA. We interviewed your son/daughter and wish to thank them for their time and cooperation.

Now we are requesting that you, the parents, complete a similar questionnaire and return it to us. The purpose of the parent questionnaire is to determine the parents' perspective about how and why certain schooling choices were made and how satisfied the parents are with the programs selected. It is important to see if parents and their children have the same or different opinions about the SEA secondary school (junior and senior high) programs; and if they differ, how? We are also seeking your suggestions for ways to improve the programs. We hope this questionnaire will give you an opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions with us and the decision makers at MUHS.

As you may notice the questionnaire has a number at the top; this code is to be used to match your questionnaire with your son's/daughters. The responses you and your child make will be totally confidential and no results will be reported or analyzed by student or parent names.

If you have any questions, please call the SEA Evaluation office (331-6257) between 8:00-4:15 Monday to Friday.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

A. Thel Kocher

A. Thel Kocher

Katherine Gray-Feiss

Katherine Gray-Feiss

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ATK/KGF:eap

Appendix B

Breakdown of parent responses for each program option

UNGRADED 6-8

	N	%	
Mail	19	56	68%
Phone	4	12	
No	11	32	
Total	39	100	

GRADED 7-8

	N	%	
Mail	16	51	61%
Phone	3	10	
No	12	39	
Total	31	100	

OPEN 6-8

	N	%	
Mail	5	29	47%
Phone	3	18	
No	9	53	
Total	17	100	

OPEN 9

	N	%	
Mail	6	67	78%
Phone	1	11	
No	2	22	
Total	9	100	

TRADITIONAL 9

	N	%	
Mail	13	45	65%
Phone	6	20	
No	10	35	
Total	29	100	

PRATT 6

	N	%	
Mail	2	40	80%
Phone	2	40	
No	1	20	
Total	5	100	

MARCY 6

	N	%	
Mail	6	60	80%
Phone	2	20	
No	2	20	
Total	10	100	

Appendix C

Explanation of Occupational Classification

People were generally classified into one of three occupational categories, managerial-professional, white-collar, or blue-collar. Those occupations which required a college degree were generally categorized as managerial-professional. White-collar workers were seen as being primarily civil servants, service-workers, and entrepreneurs. Blue-collar workers were seen as being manual laborers, factory workers, etc. Occupations represented on the questionnaires were classified as follows:

> Managerial-professional: Medical therapist, librarian, teacher, self-employed, office manager, field manager, architect, business manager, soil scientist, professor, registered nurse, foreman, accountant, social worker.
>
> White-collar: talent agent, insurance agent, policeman, salesman, teacher's aide, bookkeeper, designer, weaver, clerk, piano teacher, secretary, office worker, receptionist, hair dresser.
>
> Blue-collar: electrician, heating repairman, tool and die maker, electronics engineer, construction worker, surveyor, engineer.

Evaluator's note: Three additional categories were used to adequately classify the students' responses: homemaker, student and unemployed.

Source: David Sonnenfeld, Family Choice in Schooling: A Case Study: Intradistrict Student Transfers. Eugene, Oregon. Working Paper 3 (October, 1972). Page 39.